

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

Wednesday morning found us at the Fleming Museum, guests of the University of Vermont. Mary Cunningham of the New York Association traced for us the changes in local history study over the past 50 years. She recalled the introduction of local history as an integral part of the national story in 1900 and reviewed the development over the 50 year period from the influence of a small circle of antiquarians to the present day projection of history into all planes of living. It was noted that sources of history had been generally recognized as social and political documents of state but it is now accepted that local history gives the true picture of American life and brings heritage to the communities.

Luncheon shifted our scene to the Waterman Building. Introduced by Prof. Leon W. Dean of the U. V. M. Department of English, Carl Carmer, in his inimitable poetic way, expressed to us how in his writing he merely tries to interpret the poetry and stories he finds in others. "Every community has a legend", Carmer said, "and events of little importance become significant in the over-all story."

Carl is author of *Stars Fell on Alabama*, *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, and the forthcoming *Dark Trees to the Wind*, co-editor of the *Rivers of America* Series, and nationally known folklorist. In his own words: "I choose to write what people will enjoy and not as an historian or as a folklorist" (although it develops that he is a master at both).

After the afternoon sessions on historic markers, delegates began to drift off, some on their way to the Archivists' Convention at Quebec. We of the Society were proud to act as host to this group and to have them see Vermont as we know it. This entire October issue has been devoted to the convention because we have felt that those of you who were unable to attend would want the complete story.

VHS News and Notes

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Montpelier, Vermont

Sec. 34.66
P. L. & R.

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATE HOUSE MONTPELIER

Leon S. Gay, President; Earle W. Newton, Director.

Telephone: Montpelier 1500, Extension 39.

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VOLUME 1

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Our drive for new members is on. We have prepared an Invitation or Certificate which is reproduced here. The idea is this . . . each member elects at least one friend to membership in the Society by sending his name into Montpelier or filling out his own certificate (we'll send you some, upon your asking).

The Notification Certificate carries the name of the proposed member and the name of the person proposing him, is signed by President Leon S. Gay and is mailed with a copy of *VHS News and Notes* and an illustrated article story of the Vermont Historical Society, *Making History Live*.

Then, the Notification Certificate is returned (with dues) and we have a new member.

Since the drive was begun, Mr. Vrest Orton, our member from Weston and very active on the membership committee, has alone nominated 23 new members, who have accepted.

The Notification Certificate is sufficiently clear as to the different memberships. That is, an active membership is \$3.00 a year; a sustaining, \$5.00 (which covers one year's dues and entitles member to one book dividend a year—a publication of the Society); an institutional, \$10.00 a year (institutional meaning local historical societies, PTA groups, Vermont industries, and so on) and life, \$100.00 (you never have to be bothered with dues again!).

Members receive copies of the official magazine *Vermont Quarterly*, without charge, and the monthly newsletter, *VHS News and Notes*, and are allowed a discount on all publications of the Society.

Our membership at this point totals 814. We need your nominations to show an increase in next month's newsletter. Our goal is 1000 by December 31.

We thank those members who have sent in their proposals for membership. We say to you who have not, please sit down and write us a post card, won't you?

THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Board of Curators
to announce that the name of

Stanley Gray

has been proposed for membership in this Society by

John Louts

We shall be happy to welcome you to membership.
You may participate in the privileges and prerogatives
(as set forth, veris)

of the class of membership you designate, upon the return,
with dues, of this Notification Certificate to
The Director, The Vermont Historical Society,
State House, Montpelier, Vermont.



Given under my hand and seal
of the Society, on this 1st day
of November, 1949

Leon S. Gay President

WHY MORE MEMBERS?

Your Society's work represents the extension and perpetuation of your idea of what is worthwhile in living.

What of the future? Will the Society be able to meet the demands upon it? Will it continue to serve the scholar, the professional man, the business man, the genealogist and the student? Will it improve its services? Will it increase the availability of its resources?

More members—more active supporters—are our answer.

AMERICAN HERITAGE

Just a note to tell you that copies of the first issue of this new national magazine of history are still available (although they will not be, for long). A subscription will entitle you to the September issue—which carries the section in color of Fort Ticonderoga, of early Champlain steamboating as well as Middlebury College and the Sheldon Museum.

The rate is \$3.00 a year. Mail your requests here—to Montpelier. Isn't this a thought for an ideal Xmas gift?

KIND WORDS FOR OUR CARTOONS

The *Newport Daily Express* of Newport, Vermont, carried the following editorial on Saturday, October 8th:

"We have been following rather closely the series of Vermont pictorial sketches published in state newspapers and sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society, the artist being George Merkle. Of course the pictures are imaginative but the text accompanying them is presumed to be true and authentic. Our guess is that the accomplishments of our forefathers were less a matter of I. Q. than of good Y. I. I. Q. as everyone knows, stands for intelligent quotient, but some may not know that Y. I. stands for Yankee ingenuity.

"It was likely more of the latter than of the former which caused James Wilson of Bradford about the year 1800 to educate himself in geography, astronomy, map-making and spherical projection, urged him to travel about New England on foot to acquire knowledge of engraving and set him up in making globes in America, he being the first globe maker this side of the water.

"Good Vermont common sense caused the state's constitutional convention of 1777 to outlaw slavery, the first legislative body on this continent to take this advanced position regarding human rights, and Vermont was the first state in the Union to provide universal manhood suffrage. Early custom in this country made the ownership of property a requisite to the vote.

"After having refused to cooperate in forming the union of the 13 original states of the United States, Vermont soon recognized her error and asked Congress for admission to the Union, thereby becoming the first state to be admitted after the original formation of the United States.

"In the Civil War Vermont felt deeply her obligation to the cause of the North and Norwich University furnished 273 commissioned officers in that struggle, and a greater number of recruits than any other college except West Point. In connection with Vermont in military service, it may be said the oldest Stars and Stripes in existence is housed in Bennington Museum. It was carried in the Battle of Bennington in 1777.

"In 1828 in Windsor a gadget was made known as the 'revolving hydrolic engine'. This was the beginning of the machine tool industry in Vermont and

the influence of this Vermont born gadget spread throughout the country far beyond the seas, says our information.

"In this series of historical sketches is much interesting information about the state not generally known. For example, we are told in one of these sketches that Millet, the French painter who created the famous oil painting, 'The Angelus,' was inspired by a Vermonter named Hunt who went to France and found the then struggling artist working in a damp barn.

"A hundred years ago Vermont had many toll roads or turnpikes named after the turnstile. One had to pay to travel them. As a result back roads were built and came to be known as 'shunpikes' and traveled in order to shun paying toll. Later all roads were made free. Vermont today is said to have enough back roads to half circle the globe.

"George Dewey, a Vermonter, was made Admiral of the Navy during the Spanish-American War at the close of the last century, the only person before or since to have held that high title and rank.

"This column believes the Vermont Historical Society in sponsoring these sketches, and the Vermont newspapers using them, are each doing the state and its people a worthwhile service. The more we know of the early history and ingenuity of our founding fathers, the greater should be our inspiration to use our own ingenuity now, and not turn to our government for aid at every difficult spot."

Thank you, *Newport Express*.

VERMONT THANKSGIVINGS

It was some years after the Puritans and Indians shared their Thanksgiving feast in a Massachusetts settlement that Vermonters had their first holiday.

It was a time of stress and crisis. Vermont had not yet joined the Union and its status as an independent nation was not at all secure. But Vermonters, grateful for their rich harvest and eager to express their praise for the joys they had, urgently besieged Thomas Chittenden, their first governor. Thus, the twenty-sixth day of November, 1778, was proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving throughout the state.

And so the first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in Vermont. But it did not become custom.

The American Revolution ended but still Vermont's petition lay before the Continental Congress with no action taken. This tiny inland nation, bordered by foreign powers, remained undiscouraged and continued to press Congress for acceptance to the United States.

In 1791, its patience was rewarded and Vermont became the 14th state of the Union.

But it was not until six years later, in 1797, that a second Thanksgiving Day was proclaimed. And not for a good many years—in 1854, to be exact—that the day was proclaimed yearly. And even then, it was not the same date every year. Sometimes it came in November, sometimes in December.

Finally, on October 3, 1863, President Lincoln issued the First National Thanksgiving Proclamation.

And of course we cannot forget those war years when Vermont decided not to observe the National holiday which had been changed, and so it happened that some of us had two.

MUSEUM ACCESSIONS

White china teapot, with gold decorations—a wedding piece of William Czar Bradley, a Vermonter not so many of us are familiar with who starred in international relations. Born in Westminster in 1782, his most important public service came when he served on a commission of American and British statesmen to try and make peace during the War of 1812. Known as a jurist, wit, scholar and statesman, in a full and busy life, Bradley served his state and his country well.

Miss Martha E. Nye of San Diego, California, has donated her collection of the Nye family to the Society. Among the articles are a Bow china pitcher, which was taken from the family homestead in Berlin to Minnesota by Asahel Nye in 1858; a silver serving spoon, of the wedding outfit of Mrs. Asahel Nye; linen tablecloth, spun and woven by Sophia Nye, born 1822; died, 1855.

Civil War mementos, of John H. Hurley, of Northfield. Mr. Hurley was an expert marble carver, and was employed by the state to clean up the statue of Ethan Allen on the State House piazza after vandals had given it a coating of shoe polish. (Gift of Mrs. Minnie H. Hurley of Northfield).

Sabre and scabbard, which belonged to General William Wells, during the Civil War. General Wells was born in Waterbury. (Gift of Mrs. H. Nelson Jackson and Frank R. Wells of Burlington).

Early day by day record of weather, at Randolph Center with notations on snow falls,—“Thermometrical observations”—commenced on December 27, 1828 and includes remarks on crops, livestock, births and deaths of neighbors, town meetings and discontinued on November 26, 1863, upon death of author William Nutting, first principal of Orange County Grammar School.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!

With Christmas just around the corner, and many of us pondering over last minute gifts, let us not overlook the fine books recently published by your Society. Here are some of the latest:

The Vermont Story, by Earle W. Newton, is the first full-length history of the people of the Green Mountain State, with nearly two hundred reproductions in full color of famous paintings, historic sites, old maps as well as several hundred drawings and photographs. You are presented a colorful pageant of Vermont, from its beginnings to the present (1749-1949) — good for children and adults alike. \$7.50.

Here are a few excerpts from the reviews and editorials its publication evoked:

Portland Oregonian: “The first volume of a series on the forty-eight states has made its appearance as the *Vermont Story* . . . If the series can maintain the standard set by this first book, then it will be an achievement of the front rank in the field of popular — and illustrated — history. . . It is hard to believe that they could have had a finer volume — even with the State of Oregon for the subject.”

Hartford, Conn., *Courant*: “. . . It is not only a new book but a new kind of book. It combines the advantages of professional research and scholarship with *Life* magazine at its best. Because of Connecticut's part in founding and developing the Green Mountain State, it should be of particular interest here . . .”

Burlington Daily News: “. . . every true son of Vermont whether native or adopted will find this book to be worth any dozen other books on the best-seller lists.”

New York Herald Tribune: “. . . The idea of the series was to present an authentic state history that was also readable, in striking contrast to the great majority of state histories produced in the past . . . If the other forty-seven states

